



MID-MICHIGAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

730 West Maple St. • Lansing, MI 48906
Phone: (517) 485-5379 • Fax: (517) 485-5892



February 7, 2006

House of Representatives,
Regulatory Reform Committee
House Office Building
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Committee Member,

We are writing to offer our support for House Bill 5354. This bill, as introduced, would allow the Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy (MMLA) to purchase the property commonly known as former Michigan school for the blind.

As detailed in the attached document, MMLA has a strong vested interest in the future disposition of this property. We have been tenants there since 1996, and our institutional identity is closely linked to the site. We are eager to strengthen our active role in the preservation, development and maintenance of the building and grounds for the betterment of our school and the entire Lansing community. We have been interested in purchasing the site for many years now and are eager to complete this transaction with your help and support.

Our entire school community – students, staff, parents and school leaders alike – is solidly united behind this important effort. We ask for your support of HB 5354 so that we can move forward with our plans and begin working to make our vision for this property a reality.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Hanley
Board President

Mark S. Eitrem
Superintendent

A Legacy of Learning

HB 5354 would allow for the conveyance of the former Michigan School for the Blind property, located on 34 acres near downtown Lansing, to the Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy (MMLA). MMLA seeks to purchase and develop this property for ongoing educational purposes, while preserving the site's historic value and economic importance to the City of Lansing.

Plan Benefits:

- This parcel was originally developed in the mid-1850s for educational purposes. By permitting MMLA to purchase the property, **the Legislature can continue the strong historical legacy of learning** that is associated with this site.



- The campus, which is largely vacant at the present time, is in an increasing state of disrepair and neglect. As an on-site tenant with a vested interest in the property's value, **MMLA is already committed to ensuring the safety, utility and appearance of the building and grounds.** Giving MMLA the power to plan and effect necessary

changes will help bolster the surrounding neighborhoods and secure the site's economic value to the community as a whole.

- **There is a solid community of support already in place.** The MMLA school community strongly identifies with the School for the Blind site and is committed to its preservation and development. In contemplating this purchase, the school has already obtained the firm support of students, parents and families; as well as local neighborhood associations and others.

- Support for this conveyance will help ensure the **long-term growth and stability of a high-quality educational alternative** for Lansing area students and families.



Fast Facts

About the Parcel

Total Area:	33.8 Acres or 1,472,328 Square Feet
Buildings:	25
Age of the Buildings:	From 1912 to 1979
Zoning:	B Residential
Building Area:	307, 340 Square Feet
Electrical:	4160/3 Phase –Run Underground between buildings.
Heating:	Central Boiler (Tube) – Cleaver Brooks (Steam and Hot Water)-Gas
Air Conditioning:	Several Buildings have central AC. Most, including all school buildings, utilize window units.
Sewer:	Located throughout campus.
Gas:	Several buildings have their own gas lines directly from the street.
Domestic Water:	Run through central system via underground network.
Parking:	Small parking areas are scattered throughout the facility. One large, unpaved parking area is remotely located across Maple Street at the Southeastern corner of the property.
School Use:	Currently the school uses the Administration Building, the Elementary Building, the Gymnasium, and part of the Service Building. Additionally, space within the Willow Building (Lyons Hall) is used for storage.

About MMLA

Status:	Operating as a Public School Academy funded by the State of Michigan with no cost to parents
Geographic Area Served:	Greater Lansing Area
Grades Served:	Preschool, Kindergarten, 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th , 6 th , 7 th , and 8 th
Number of Students:	Approximately 210, with 39% African American, 28% Caucasian, 22% Hispanic, and 12% of other ethnic backgrounds. 92% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch, and 12% are special education pupils.
Lead Administrator:	Mark S. Eitrem, Superintendent
Founder(s):	Paul N. DeWeese and Norman D. Shinkle
Year of Opening:	1996
Special Designation:	Whole School Title I
Chartering Agency:	Central Michigan University

- Golden Apple Award winner, 2002
- MMLA class sizes are generally smaller than the traditional district with K-2 averaging about 26 students, and 3-8 averaging about 24.
- Mid-Michigan Leadership Academy is currently the only independently-operated charter school with labor association.
- 100% of our Teachers are considered Highly Qualified according to NCLB.
- Student busing is available at no cost to students.
- A uniformly applied, progressive discipline program has been established and has been successfully implemented.

- Parent surveys reflect an overall positive satisfaction with the administration, faculty, and staff of MMLA.
- A cold breakfast and a hot lunch are served every day.